

The Migration of the Anderson and Peterson Families to Lehi

Written by Lee Anderson

Denmark is one of Europe's smallest countries. It is located just north of Germany, near Sweden and Norway. 80 percent of the soil in Denmark is suitable for farming and the other 20 percent is low and boggy. There were a few "Gaards" or large farming estates, which had been handed down from generation to generation to the oldest son. It was on one of these "Gaards" that Anders and Inger Jensen's firstborn son was born on the 19th of July 1812 in the small town of Veddum. Veddum is part of the Skelund Parish¹ in the county of Aalborg.

The tradition in Denmark at the time was for the firstborn son to be named after his grandfather so the baby was named Jens after Anders' father. Another tradition in Denmark was to have the last name of the children be derived from the first name of their father. Therefore Anders son became known as Jens Andersen, or the son of Anders.

Nothing is known of Jens' early life except that he learned to work very hard. He also learned the business of running the very large farming estate. They had many workers on their farm including servants in their home. One of the servants was a young woman named Ann Katherine Rasmussen.

Ann Katherine Rasmussen was born on the 22nd of October 1814 in the town of Trustrop Aalborg, Denmark to Rasmus and Mette Marie Jensen. She and her younger sister Caroline were left orphans under the care of an uncle. This uncle invested their dowries in a lottery and lost it so they had no money left and had to go find work. Caroline ended up marrying a dragoon² in the Kings Guard and Ann Katherine found work as a servant in the home of Anders Jensen in Veddum.

Anders' son Jens and Ann Katherine soon fell in love and had what was called a "real romance." They were married on the 3rd of November 1843. Soon afterwards on the 9th of March 1844 a son was brought into the family. Jens and Ann Katherine named him Anders Rasmus Andersen after both of their fathers.

Jens' father turned the farm over to Jens soon after he was married and he became the gaardmand or farmer. The farm that Jens had inherited was very large. It was not uncommon to have 25 to 30 people at regular meals as well as those living in houses belonging to the estate. Everyone on the estate, including Jens and his family, was required to work very hard. Work commenced at daybreak until after sundown. Ann Katherine's personality, determination and an executive eye for business made her a vital part of the running of the "Veddum Goord", as the estate was called. Jens' son Anders, grew up and also learned the value of hard work. He was the next in line to inherit the estate and he was learning what was required to run the business.

¹ The Lutheran Church was the official church of Denmark. The smallest organization in the church was the parish. A parish is a territorial unit that is under the jurisdiction of a parish priest. In Denmark the country was divided into counties which are divided into districts and the districts are divided into parishes. The parish was where most of the records of the people were kept.

² A dragoon was a member of a light Calvary unit trained in fighting from horseback.

On June 14, 1851 Erastus Snow and other missionaries arrived in Copenhagen, Denmark and began preaching the gospel. In 1861, Anders Andersen was walking down the street and saw the missionaries preaching. He decided to listen and the Holy Ghost bore witness that what they were saying was true. On the 13th of March 1861 Anders and his mother were baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His father followed nine days later.

Many workers were needed to accomplish the tasks that kept such a large estate running. One of the many workers that hired on at the estate was a girl named Mariane Neilsen.

Mariane Neilsen was the daughter of Neils Peder and Johanna Pedersen. She was born on the 29th of September 1837 in Veddum. She was the 3rd child out of nine. The Pedersen's lived in a modest home on a farm where everyone was expected to take part in the household tasks.

When Mariane got older she went to work on the estate of Jens Andersen. She was required to take part in many of the chores on the farm including taking care of the cows, raking the hay, harvesting grain, digging turf³ and stacking it to dry for fuel in the winter.

Mariane also helped out with baking the large amounts of bread that was required to feed the large crew that worked on the farm. Once a month it was wash day and all of the family's and farm hands clothes needed to be washed and hung out to dry. Mariane helped with this also as well as cutting and curing the many beef that was slaughtered to feed the crew throughout the year. Mariane loved to sing and she would happily sing while she was doing the many chores that were required of her.

Jens and his family helped spread the Gospel to the workers on their farm. One of the families that listened to the missionaries' message was the Pedersens. While the missionaries were teaching the gospel to Mariane they taught her many hymns. After that it was common to hear the songs of Zion being sung around the farm as Mariane went about her work. (Mariane and her sisters all had beautiful singing voices.) Mariane and her family were baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints a short time later.

Mariane and her family tried hard to live the Gospel that they had just embraced and were eager to spread the message of the restored Gospel to anyone who would listen. In the evenings Mariane would gather with many of associate workers in the Anderson home to listen to the Elders preach the Gospel.

There was quite a religious revival that took place on the estate of Jens Andersen. With the help of the missionaries, the Pedersen's and Andersen's families, many of the workers on the farm were converted and a small branch was organized in Veddum.

The official state religion in Denmark was Lutheran. The LDS missionaries were not welcomed into many communities and some were beaten or imprisoned. There was a lot of speculation of the beliefs and teachings of the new religion and many members were persecuted. Regardless of all of the opposition, the Andersen and Pedersen families embraced their new religion.

³ Wood was not very plentiful so many of the farmers would dig large strips of turf or peat out of the boggy ground because it was filled with decaying plants. When it was dried it could be burned and used for fuel.

They had a great desire to travel to Utah to be with their fellow Saints but because of the cost, it was just a dream for most of the new members. The decision for Jens and his family was different. It was reminiscent of the young man asking the Savior what he had to do to have eternal life. The Savior said, *“If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow me.”*

Like the young man, Jens and his family had great possessions, but they quickly started making the preparations to travel to Utah and helped finance the trip for 60 – 70 other Saints who did not have the money on their own.

Just being willing to travel to Utah took a great deal of faith. Many had heard stories of the terrible war that was going on in America and the savage Indians were wreaking havoc in the west. It did not seem to be a safe place.

On a chilly Sunday, April 6th 1862, the saints from the Aalborg Conference boarded the steamship Albion to begin the journey to America. They said goodbye to their family and friends and their beloved country with the knowledge that they probably would never see them again.

They all boarded the steamship at 3:00 pm and an hour later the ship made its way out of the port of Aalborg down the Limfjorden Strait into the Kattegat Bay. It must have been difficult leaving everything that was familiar to them and traveling to a strange land to start a new life. I wonder if they tried to see their beloved village of Vedum (which was only about 5 miles off of the coast) as the ship passed along the east coast of Denmark.

During the night the ship stopped at the port of Aharus to pick up more saints who were also traveling to America and then the next morning they stopped briefly in Frederica for even more saints to board. There were around 700 saints in all. Then the ship negotiated its way through the narrow and twisting waterway known as the Little Belt and made its way into the Keil Bay.

As the ship was traveling up the Kiel Fjord it was hung up on a sandbar. The captain had all of the saints move as a body from one side of the ship to the other and then everyone moved to the back of the ship to try to work it off of the sandbar. The ship finally came free and they were able to finish the first leg of their journey to Kiel, Germany.

The next morning the saints all boarded a train that took them the 60 miles to Hamburg, Germany. There they gathered the last of the essential supplies necessary for the trip across the Atlantic Ocean. The saints were divided into four groups, those that came with Jens and his family, were assigned to board the ship named the Franklin; other saints were assigned to the Humboldt, Electric, and the Athena.

By 1862 the days of the sailing ships were numbered because they were being replaced with the new steamships. The Franklin was a three mast sailing ship with two decks, a round stern and a figurehead. Around 400 passengers shared 160 bunks that were placed quite close together to optimize the available space. Each bunk was extra wide to allow three people to sleep in if necessary.

After everyone had their baggage stowed away they helped bring the food on board that was to be rationed throughout the voyage. It consisted of beef, pork, peas, beans, potatoes, pearl barley, rice,

prunes, syrup, vinegar, pepper, coffee, tea, sugar, butter, rye bread, sea biscuits, water, flour, salted herring, salt and oil for the lamps.

Everyone was eager to get to America but unfortunately on a sailing ship they were at the mercy of the wind. They ended up waiting for nearly a week for a favorable wind. They spent the time getting to know each other and getting everyone organized into eight groups with 20 bunks in each group. There were 259 adults, 131 children, 19 infants totaling 409 Saints.

Many of the saints had lost some of their clothing and baggage because it was mixed up with the saints on the ship Humboldt. The weather was cold with snow and hail so everyone stayed below deck most of the time.

They waited until the 15th of April for a favorable wind but none came so two steamships towed their ship seven miles down the Elbe River to get them on their way. There was some sickness on board but it was thought to be from the travel and the change in diet. The following day the weather was beautiful and everyone was in good spirits. A dance was held up on deck.

Each morning the saints woke up at 5:00 AM to the sound of a clarinet being played followed by one to two numbers on the accordion. At 7:00 AM the clarinet sounded again gathering everyone together for morning prayers. Then at 8:00 in the evening the clarinet let everyone know it was time for evening prayers.

The morning of the 17th of April brought sadness for some because a nine month old child passed away. Her body was brought ashore the following day for burial. They stayed at the mouth of the Elbe River near Cuxhaven, Germany for a few days waiting for a favorable wind to carry them across the Atlantic. While they waited, two more children died and several more got sick.

Some of the saints had unknowingly brought the Measles on board. Because of the close proximity of the passengers, it soon became an epidemic. They tried everything they could to fight off the disease including washing the decks three times a week and fumigating the ship with burning tar twice a week.

On Monday the 21st of April, the winds finally cooperated, the crew weighed anchor and they began their voyage across the North Sea. Two couples were married and spirits were high. The next day they sailed past the Island of Helgoland which was seen on the starboard side of the ship. Another couple was married and a child was born.

Three days after they began the voyage across the North Sea, another child died and Jens became sick. Many of the Saints were feeling the effects of seasickness. The next morning another child died.

On Friday the 25th of April, Jens Andersen's condition became worse. In the evening Jens died and his body was buried in the North Sea. The typical method for burial at sea was to wrap the body in a blanket and place it on a plank that had one end hanging over the side of the ship. One end of a rope was fastened around the ankles of the body and the other end of the rope was tied to a large rock. After a brief service was held on deck, the plank was raised and the body went overboard and sank beneath the waves.

Jens Anderson was very well loved and respected by many and his death was a tremendous blow to his family and friends. It was a great test of their faith. They were comforted with the knowledge of the resurrection and the hope of being with Jens again as an Eternal Family.

The voyage continued and unfortunately many more children became sick and died. As the ship was sailing through the English Channel, it was necessary to call two more of the sisters as nurses' aids; one of them was Mariane Pedersen. They were kept busy going from family to family, trying to take care of the sick and afflicted to make them more comfortable.

The sick were served twice a day with porridge made from barley, rice or sago, and almost every day pancakes could be had by the hundreds for the sick who could not eat the 'hard tack'. Hardtack or what the emigrants called "sea biscuits" was one of the main foods that they ate. Hardtack is made from flour, a little salt and water. It is baked and then set out to age. The older it gets the harder it gets until it assumes the consistency of fired brick. The emigrants found that they could eat it better if they soaked it in water for 8 -12 hours.

To raise morale and to take their minds off of the sickness and death all around them, the emigrants would gather on the deck almost every evening and have a dance for a couple of hours.

On the 21st of May, the ship passed by Nova Scotia and here they saw what they thought was a stone wall rising out of the water. As they got closer, they noticed that it was an iceberg. On Thursday May 29th, the ship Franklin finally reached New York. The ship was about one week late because of heavy head winds. The immigrants packed all of their bedding and clothing and prepared to leave the ship.

A large transport boat came and got their luggage and the immigrants were finally able to leave the Franklin. Unfortunately when the inspectors came on board the Franklin they noticed there were many bodies⁴ on board and some people were still sick. They ordered the immigrants back on the Franklin where they waited for two more days in quarantine within sight of land.

Only about ten percent of their bedding was returned to the immigrants while they were quarantined on the Franklin. Many of the sick were taken ashore to a hospital. While they waited on the coast near New York another child died and was buried in the water.

Finally on Sunday May 31st, the immigrants were able to leave the Franklin and set foot in the land they had sacrificed so much to see. There were 48 deaths while they were on the Franklin, most were children but three adults also died. The journey across the Atlantic was finished but they still had a long way to go.

After they were processed at the immigration port, Castle Garden, their luggage was returned and they boarded the train headed for Lake St. Clair which is between Lake Huron and Lake Erie. They took a steamboat across the lake to Detroit where they once more boarded a train bound for Quincy, Illinois. They headed down the Mississippi River to Hannibal, Missouri and boarded another train headed for St.

⁴ When they were nearing land and a child died the parents couldn't bear to bury them in the cold dark waters of the Atlantic Ocean so they kept the bodies on board so they could bury them when they got to land.

Joseph, Missouri. There they got on another steamboat and headed up the Missouri River to Florence, Nebraska. Two more children died on the trip from New York to Florence. They were buried along the way.

In Florence, all of the immigrants from Denmark that had been separated in Hamburg and sent to different ships for the trip across the Atlantic were reunited. The Saints that had the means to continue the trek were placed in independent companies while the others received assistance from wagons that were supplied by the Church. The Saints spent several weeks finishing the preparations for the journey across the plains

The conditions were quite miserable for the Saints. The pouring rains filled their tents with ankle deep mud and water. Their bedding, clothing and other supplies were soaked through and floated in the mud and slush.

A few days before they began their trek, a tornado came through Florence and the vicinity and wreaked havoc with the wagon companies that were preparing to go. Two men were killed and another man was knocked unconscious when a wagon box fell on him. All of the tents and wagon covers were badly torn and shattered. While the Saints that were on the Franklin were in Florence, four adults and seven children died.

The Saints that came on the Franklin were assigned to the same wagon company and were led by Captain Christian A. Madsen. He had been in charge of the Saints while on board the Franklin and their trip to Florence. The company consisted of 264 persons, 40 wagons, 14 horses, 174 oxen, 99 cows, 37 heifers, seven calves, six dogs and 10 chickens, and brought along 22 tents, 32 cooking stoves, five revolvers and 37 rifles. Luggage space was limited and many of the Saints were disappointed when they had to leave a great deal of their possessions behind.

The wagon companies were much different from the handcart companies. There was not nearly the amount of hardships and suffering. Not because of the walking, because most of the Saints in the wagon companies walked also. The main difference was the supplies they were able to take with them and the extra energy it took to move the handcarts.

The Christian A. Madsen Company left Florence, Nebraska on July 14th 1862 and began the 1000 mile trek to Salt Lake City, Utah. The first few days the Saints had a hard time with the oxen. The main problem was that the oxen were not familiar with the Danish commands but after a few days of training everything was under control. Many times on the trail they had to be creative with what they could find for fuel to cook with. They used sunflower stalks many times and when there was nothing else, they used buffalo chips.

The Indians were a familiar sight along the trail. They were mainly interested in trading and begging for food and other supplies. One of the brethren sold an Indian a quart of whiskey for a buffalo robe. This prompted a council meeting where it was explained that it was against the law to sell the Indians whiskey and anyone who did was to be arrested and his property was to be divided between the complainant, and the state.

Wolves were quite common along the trail. It caused many of the Saints several restless nights when the wolves would howl at night. In the evenings the Saints would arrange their wagons in a circle to provide a corral for the animals. The Saints would pitch their tents and have their fires outside the circle.

The livestock was one of the Saints most valuable resources. They had to be guarded at all times to keep them from being stolen by the Indians or being attacked by wolves or other wild animals. Anders Andersen and Mariane were given the job of following the wagon train and driving the livestock and the sore-footed oxen that were not able to pull the wagons. This took much prodding and often they would reach camp hours after everyone else had.

One of the oxen became desperately lame and it was Anders' turn to drive the cattle. The sun had gone down and they were still quite a ways from camp. They couldn't travel very fast because of the lame ox and Anders decided that something had to be done. He pulled out his pistol, looked at the ox and decided that where it measured the most around the body was the vital spot. BANG! Went the pistol, down went the ox and camp was reached shortly thereafter.

We don't know for sure when the relationship between Anders and Mariane sparked but during the many hours spent walking with each other driving the cattle it burst into a flame and they fell deeply in love.

The wagon train finally reached the Salt Lake Valley on the 12th of September 1862. It was a trying journey for all of the Saints. There were 62 deaths in the company from when they left Denmark to when they arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. Many of the Saints in the company chose Ephraim⁵ as their home including the Andersens and the Pedersens. Shortly after arriving in Ephraim, Anders wanted to embrace his new country and one of the ways he did this was to Americanize his name by changing it to Andrew Anderson. Mariane changed her name to Maryann.

Andrew and Maryann were married on the 1st of January 1863 in Ephraim, Utah. While the Anderson and Pedersen families were living in Ephraim, there began to be problems with the Indians in what was called the Blackhawk War⁶. Often the little town of Ephraim was attacked by Chief Black Hawk and his braves when they would come to drive off their cattle and plunder the town. Eventually they built a wall around the meeting house for some protection.

When the Indians were on the warpath, Andrew and others would ride from farm to farm raising the alarm. (Andrew was chosen because he had a bay horse that he had purchased in Florence, Nebraska and brought with him across the plains.) Someone would start beating on the old bass drum, which was the signal for all of the women and children to run inside the walls of the fort while the men grabbed their guns and went defend against the invaders. The Indians would ride single file at full speed in a large circle around the settlers' barricade. They would ride hanging on the side of their horses and shoot over

⁵ Many Danish saints settled in Ephraim.

⁶ Between the years of 1865 – 1872 there were around 150 battles, skirmishes, raids and killings between the Mormon settlers in Southern Utah and members of the Ute, Paiute and Navajo tribes led by a local Ute chief, Antonga Black Hawk. These battles terrorized the settlers in Southern Utah and became known as the Black Hawk War.

its back. As one would ride by the defender's barricade, another would take his place thus they were able to keep up a constant fire.

It was during one of these stressful times with the beating of the bass drum and reports coming in of the wounded and the fallen, when Maryann went into labor and had her second son. Thankfully after the battle the father and his new son were introduced. They named him Andrew Bjering⁷ Anderson.

During the harvesting of the crops, Maryann would put her two sons in a little two-wheeled wagon with wheels made out of sawed off logs and deliver supper to the men in the fields.

In 1870 Canute Peterson of Lehi was called to serve as the bishop of the Ephraim Ward. An arrangement was made and he and Andrew exchanged farms. Andrew's family and his mother made their home in Lehi from then on. After arriving in Lehi, Andrew served as the town marshal for a short time.

Johanna Pedersen died on the 6th of January 1879. Neils Peder Pedersen began working on the Manti Temple from the beginning of its construction and said that the thing he wanted most of all was to see it completed. He continued to work in the temple until its completion and died 2 weeks after its dedication on the 19th of March 1888. He and his wife are buried in the Ephraim Pioneer Cemetery on the east hillside.

While Joseph Smith was translating the Bible he became troubled by the fact that Abraham, Jacob, David and others had more than one wife. He took the matter to the Lord and was told that at certain times, for specific purposes, following divinely given laws, plural marriage was approved and directed by God. He also learned that with Divine approval some Latter-day Saints would be chosen by Priesthood authority to marry more than one wife. In the August 1852 General Conference, Elder Orson Pratt, as directed by Brigham Young, announced that the practice of a man having more than one wife was part of the Lord's restitution of all things.

In 1871 Andrew married Nelsina Maria Andersen as his second wife. The three women, Andrew's mother Ann Katherine, Mariane and Nelsina formed a right triangle with Ann Katherine as the right angle and by working together there was peace and harmony in their home. Nelsina described the situation to Andrew Rasmus Anderson's son Andrew Bjering Anderson shortly before she died. She said, *"Andrew, I did not want to hurt your mother, I loved your mother and she was a mother to me. I was a young girl who had left a happy home in Denmark. On the journey to America my father, mother, brother and sister passed away. I was a stranger in a strange land with a strange language. My loneliness was terrible and your father and mother showed me kindness and gave me a home. I went to your mother and asked her permission to marry your father and she granted my wishes."*

A.B. Anderson wrote of the relationship, *"This was a divine way to meet a divine problem. Nothing but the sweetest love for and the greatest confidence in a mortal woman could have prompted her in asking the privilege of sharing the heart strings of the greatest gift from God. I esteem my heritage highly to be the descendant of such lineage."*

⁷ The name Bjering came from Andrew's grandfather on his mother's side. His name was Rasmus Jensen Bjering.

In 1874 Andrew was called on a mission for two years back to his native land of Denmark. He was given the duty of being a traveling missionary and he eventually became the President of the Aarhus Conference until his return home. In 1879 Andrew was elected the mayor of Lehi.

From 1862 on the government was agitated into a legislative movement against polygamy. There was a maximum penalty of \$1000 and a three year prison term for polygamy and an additional \$300 for living with and maintaining a plural wife. Hundreds pled guilty, paid the fines and served the sentence rather than disown or discard the plural family.

Many including President John Taylor, went onto hiding to avoid arrest by federal officers. Families feared late night intrusions by these officers. Andrew was one of the ones that went into hiding. The outside doors were always locked to give him time to get into hiding if the officers came. An alarm system was developed where he would have advance warning if an officer was approaching.

There were many close calls until on a Sunday evening in October of 1888 the last alarm came. Andrew was doing chores but had decided to no longer continue evading arrest. The officer read the warrant and the following Monday he appeared in court and was given three months imprisonment and a \$300 fine. The period of confinement was completed in time to spend the Christmas holidays with his family and friends.

Andrew Rasmus Anderson was the head of a family of 18, himself, his mother, his two wives and 14 children, five girls and nine boys. Each morning began by kneeling in morning prayer around the breakfast. At the end of the day, they gathered once more on their knees to give thanks for the divine protection they had received throughout the day and to ask for guidance for the next day.

Ann Katherine Andersen died on the 2nd of March 1898, Mariane Pedersen Anderson died on the 23rd of September 1912, Andrew Rasmus Anderson died on the 10th of July 1919 and Nelsina Maria Anderson died on the 10th of July 1933, all in Lehi.